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TAGS: PGOV I2
SUBJECT: IRAQI OFFICIAL REPORTS TALABANI WILL NOT CONVENE
THE COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES SOON

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert S. Ford
for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) Presidency Council Chief of Staff and President Talabani's aide Kamran Karadaghi told PolOffs on February 24 that Talabani does not plan on convening the Council of Representatives (COR) on February 25. Karadaghi claimed that since the Iraqi Government was still operating under the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), vice the Constitution, it is Talabani's prerogative to delay calling the COR into session.

¶2. (C) Having said this, Karadaghi privately admitted that he had remonstrated both Talabani and Deputy President Adil Abd al-Mahdi for not releasing a press statement to explain this decision to the Iraqi public. He noted that most of the people believe that the Constitution is in effect and calls for the convention of the COR no later than February 25 (the 15-day point after the verification of the elections results). Neither Talabani nor Abd al-Mahdi were willing to be bound publicly to a specific date for convening the COR, however, and refused to address the public directly on this issue. According to Karadaghi, both Talabani and Abd al-Mahdi believe that issuing a public statement about an extension would draw unwanted attention to the fact that they have not set a date. Karadaghi felt this to be a grave mistake, and would present precedence issues for successive Iraqi governments.

KHALILZAD